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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, let the moments and hours of this day reverberate with the sounds of Your unfolding providence. May our Senators hear You working throughout their deliberations, transforming the discordant into the harmonious. May Your unseen presence enable them to discern the direction that they should take, as they seek to heed Your instructions and follow Your commands. As they fellowship with You, give them discomfort with easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships. Lord, inspire them to believe that they can make a difference in this world.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The majority leader is recognized.

### AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representa-

tives to escort His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu into the House Chamber for the joint meeting at 11 a.m., on Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later this morning, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will deliver an important address to Congress. Members of both parties extend a warm welcome to him.

This leader is a great friend of our country, and his visit comes at a critical moment in the relations between our countries.

The Prime Minister's address coincides with an increasingly aggressive Iranian campaign to expand its sphere of influence across the Middle East. It represents a threat to both of our countries, it represents a threat to moderate Sunni allies, and it represents a threat to the international community at large.

That is why Prime Minister Netanyahu is here today. He is ideally suited to explain the multitude of challenges this presents—including the threat of an Iran with nuclear weapons capability—and how our countries can address them jointly.

So we are glad the Prime Minister is here with us today. We will be listening closely to what he has to say.

I hope the Obama administration will be listening, too, because this visit isn't about personalities, it is about doing what is best for both of our countries, and here some context is important.

As it has been since its founding, Israel is in a constant state of existential crisis. It is continuously threatened by terrorists, such as Hezbollah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, who work every day to see a democratic Israel destroyed. Israel's leaders wake

every morning knowing that with just one wrong decision, it could be their last in an open and tolerant democracy. That is the frame through which the Israelis approach their national security policy.

Here is the frame the Obama administration uses: It formulates policy with two objectives in mind—fulfilling political campaign promises made back in 2008 and pursuing politically expedient solutions to whatever stands in the way of the first objective. We can see the basis for tension right there.

For me, there are two bookends that define President Obama's foreign policy.

The Executive orders that attempted to close Guantanamo without a credible plan for what to do with its detainees, and to essentially end our ability to capture, detain, and interrogate terrorists, regardless of the threats that remain for our country, represent one bookend.

The President's push to withdraw all combat forces from Iraq and Afghanistan by the end of his term, regardless of the threats posed by the Taliban or the senior leadership of Al Qaeda, represents the other bookend.

The politics-above-policy approach mystifies allies such as Israel. You can see it in many other decisions too—for instance, the President's failure to negotiate an agreement with Iraq for a residual military force that may have prevented the assault by ISIL. Instead, as threats from Al Qaeda and affiliated groups metastasized, the President focused on unwinding or reversing past policies through Executive order. Uprisings in North Africa and the broader Middle East resulted in additional ungoverned space in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. The capital of Yemen is now occupied by the Houthi militia, and the Yemenis are no more ready to detain the terrorists at Guantanamo today than they were in 2009.

What has the President's response to all this been? To draw down our conventional forces and capabilities.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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